



Your Resume

(rez-oo-may)

Whether you're a high-level professional, a student looking for a part-time job, or a homemaker returning to the job market, you need a resume. It's your primary "sales tool" to market yourself to a prospective employer—even when there's no job advertised. It's an advertisement of you, and needs to capture attention and make the reader want to give you an interview. And in today's tight job market, it needs to stand out from the rest of the resumes, be well-written and brief (one page is best).

Like the rest of the career planning process, and most of the job-searching process, it requires time and effort to create a great resume. But taking the time and making the effort will pay off in getting you the job you want.

Your first step is to list and organize your information: your education, employment history, references, etc. Make sure the information is complete. Look up addresses, phone numbers; remember dates; and current information on people to contact. Remember, you have already found your personality type, identified your specific skills, and clarified and prioritized your values. Your resume will be most effective when those other things have been done first.

Next, do some research on resumes. Look at examples of resumes given on web sites and in resume-related books. Some resources to help you are listed at the end of this article.

The "WinWay" computer program, available for use at all DWS employment centers, can help even a beginner create any kind of resume.

Now, decide what format you will use for your resume. Expect to do at least two different resumes: One scannable for your Internet job search, and one printable for mailing and handing to prospective employers. The information in them could be the same, but the formatting needs to be tailored to its function.

The use of electronic technology to manage the overwhelming number of resumes employers receive is increasing rapidly. Today many companies and employment agencies are using scanners to enter resumes into a computer. You will probably want to develop a scannable resume as well as a traditional one. More information on scannable resumes will follow.

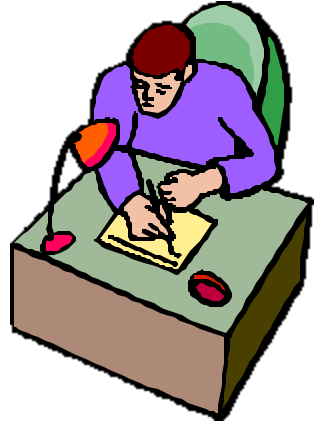
Resume Types

There are three basic types of resumes:

1. Chronological
2. Functional
3. Combination

1. Chronological (also called Reverse Chronological)

This type lists employment and employment-related experiences starting with the present and going backward in time. The chronological resume is a good format for those with a consistent employment history, no gaps in employment, and whose past employment experiences are related to their current employment goals. It effectively shows a steady work record with increasing upward responsibilities. This format may not be the best for new graduates, individuals with job gaps, or persons changing careers.



2. Functional

The functional resume is organized by functions or skills to advertise the specific qualifications you have that are needed for the occupation. It highlights skills, experience and accomplishments without identifying specific dates, names and places. This format works well for people changing careers. It is also effective for those re-entering the workforce, first-time job seekers and when highlighting experiences that occurred in the distant past. There is no chronological listing of employment. Consequently, many employers do not like this format; it creates suspicion that the person may be trying to hide something.

You should use the Functional format if:

- You are a homemaker ready to join the workforce.
- You are a veteran and want to relate your military training to civilian jobs.
- You have little or no job experience.
- You have gaps in your work history.
- You are applying for a job different from your present or most recent job.
- You want to emphasize your work skills and accomplishments instead of describing job duties.

3. Combination

As the name suggests, this format combines the best of both the chronological and functional resumes. It features a functional section that highlights skills, accomplishments and experiences. It also includes a chronological listing of employment, education and employment-related experiences. This is a very effective format for many job seekers. The best chronological resume is enhanced with a section highlighting skills, accomplishments and experience. The best functional resume is strengthened with a chronological listing of employment experiences.

Resume Layout

The resume you create needs to be unique.

There is no one layout that fits everyone.

However, most resumes have these standard parts:

Personal Data—Your name, complete mailing address, and telephone number(s) with area code, e-mail address (if you have one) are all required. Use a “block” format instead of placing the information on one line.

Employment or Career Objective—Include an objective if you have a specific career goal in mind. Phrase it in terms that will match the job you’re applying for. If you omit the objective on the resume, be sure to communicate it elsewhere, such as in the cover letter.

Summary of Qualifications—Generally employers will spend less than 10 seconds screening your resume the first time. Their goal is to eliminate as many candidates as possible and concentrate on the best. Therefore, summarizing and highlighting your qualifications early in the resume is an effective way to improve your chances for consideration.

Body of Resume

The resume format you choose will determine the sequence of information. For a chronological resume, employment history comes next. In a functional resume, the summary sections would follow. The combination format would include both summary sections and chronological listings.

Education—Unless you are a recent graduate, your education should be placed toward the end of the resume. If you are a recent graduate, then it may be listed earlier in the body. List only education that is significant to your job search. There is no need to list high school education if you have a college degree. If you have a GED, list yourself as a high school graduate.

NOTE: It’s a good idea to save your resume on a computer disk. This way you can keep several different versions that can be quickly and easily modified.

Other Activities—List only those activities that relate to your occupational goal and show skill or experience. It is best not to mention specific religious or political organizations unless they directly relate to your goal. Military experience may be listed as a separate section or as a part of the work history.



Electronic and Scannable Resumes

If you plan to submit your resume to an electronic resume database, it must be in a format that is easy for a computer to recognize and understand. The computer “reads” or scans your resume looking for keywords and then files it accordingly in its database.

Do not to use fancy fonts or graphics that a scanner cannot pick up. Even if you don’t plan to submit it to a database, many employers use scanning systems, so it is a good idea to make sure your resume is scannable anyway.

The information in an electronic resume is not that different from a traditional resume, it’s simply the manner in which you present the information that changes. Employers are likely to do keyword searches filled with nouns, such as degree held or software you’re familiar with.



Name: Your name should appear at the top with your address underneath. Make sure your name is at the top of the second page, if needed. Do not use the back of a page, always use a new sheet of paper.

Abbreviations: Avoid using abbreviations except in instances where they will be recognized. For example, abbreviations like BS, MBA and state names are recognizable. If you have a question about an abbreviation, don’t use it; spell it out.

Keywords: Keywords are nouns or short phrases and are very important in an electronic resume, since employers use keywords when searching a database. Your task is to use the keywords most common in your chosen field. If you are unsure, find out what the buzz words of the industry are, or search the help-wanted ads to see what terms employers are using to describe their requirements.

Keyword Summary: This is a brief summary of your qualifications using keyword phrases. This portion immediately follows your name and address.

Career Objective: Use of this on your resume is optional. If you do decide to include one, express a general interest in a particular field or industry, not a specific job title. Try to include a few keywords in the objective to increase your chances of getting matched (“a position as a financial analyst where I can utilize my on-the-job experience and MBA.”).

Experience and Achievements: This section should immediately follow the keyword summary. Begin with your professional experience, unless you are a recent college graduate, or are just entering the workforce. Start with your most recent position and be sure that your job title, employer, location and dates of employment are all clearly displayed. Again, try to use as many buzz words as you can.

Education: List any degrees, licenses, permits, certificates, related courses, awards or honors in this section. List any professional organizations or associations you belong to.

Formatting an Electronic Resume

Keep your resume simple. Some basic rules for formatting an electronic resume follow.

Length: One to two pages is ideal. As stated above, always make sure your name appears at the top of each subsequent page.

Paper: No need for fancy paper here. Use white, standard 8 ½ " x 11" paper and black ink.

Font: Keep it basic so that electronic scanners can read your resume. Good choices are Helvetica or Arial. It is difficult for a scanner to pick up more decorative fonts and may result in letters and words that bleed into each other or are just incorrect.

Font Size: A font size of 12 points is ideal. Never go below 10 or above 14; doing so makes it difficult for the scanner to read.

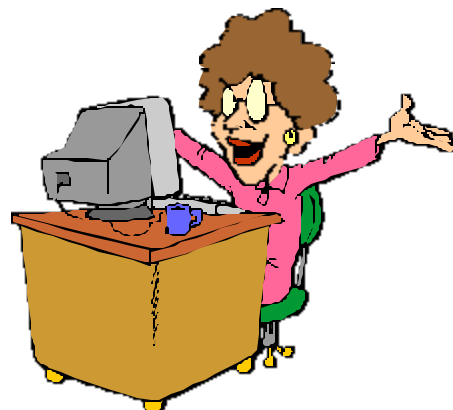
Font Style: Most scanners will accept boldface, but it is best to use boldface only for major section headings, such as "Experience" or "Education." Do not use italics or underlining. A plain style is best.

Graphics, Lines, and Shading: Avoid the temptation to use graphics and lines to liven up your resume. Scanners will "read" the graphics, lines and shading as text, resulting in computer chaos. Use a traditional resume layout (don't use two-column formats).

White Space: It's easier for a scanner to "read" your resume with accuracy if there are distinct breaks between sections.

Printing: Use a letter quality printer or have a local copy shop print your resume. Do not use a typewriter or a dot matrix printer. Always send originals, not photocopies, to ensure that your resume is as sharp and legible as possible. Faxing your resume will result in a resume with letters of a poor quality; mailing or electronic transmittal are the preferred ways to send it.

Cover Letter: Cover letters are usually not scanned, but some systems will take a "photograph" of it and store it electronically. So it's important to include a well-written cover letter that might give you the edge over other applicants. Again, mention your strongest qualifications, and if you're responding to a classified ad, try using many of the same keywords.



For more information on resumes:

<http://jobseeker.dws.state.ut.us/guides/Resume.asp> <http://www.rileyguide.com/letters.html>
<http://content.monster.com/resume/samples/resumes/>
<http://careers.altavista.com/articles/nonpaid.html>

Also, almost all web browsers have virtual libraries on their home pages (with headings like: Career, Jobs, Business) that lead to sites where you can get more advice on resumes, post resumes on line, and view job openings!